

Please amend claims 1, 3-4, 8, 13, 22, 24, and 30, as follows:

- A2
1. (Once Amended) A polymer-clay nanocomposite comprising:
- (i) a melt-processible matrix polyamide, and incorporated therein
 - (ii) a layered clay material having less than about 2.0 % by weight of quartz, based on the weight of the clay material.

- A3
3. (Once Amended) The nanocomposite of claim 1, wherein the melt-processible matrix polyamide comprises a partially aromatic polyamide, aliphatic polyamide, wholly aromatic polyamide or a mixture thereof.

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4. (Once Amended) The nanocomposite of claim 1, wherein the melt-processible matrix polyamide comprises poly(*m*-xylylene adipamide) or a copolymer thereof, isophthalic acid-modified poly(*m*-xylylene adipamide), nylon-6, nylon-6,6, a copolymer thereof, or a mixture thereof.

- A4^{sub 8.7}
C27
- (Once Amended) The nanocomposite of claim 1, wherein the clay material comprises sodium montmorillonite or sodium bentonite that has been treated with an organic cation.

- A5^{sub 8.7}
C5
13. (Once Amended) The nanocomposite of claim 1, wherein the melt-processible matrix polymer comprises poly(*m*-xylylene adipamide) or a copolymer thereof, and the clay material comprises sodium montmorillonite or sodium bentonite that has been treated with an organic cation.

22. (Once Amended) A process for preparing a polymer-clay nanocomposite comprising the steps of:

- A6
- (i) forming a concentrate comprising an oligomeric resin and a layered clay material having less than about 2.0 % by weight of quartz, based on the weight of the clay material, and

- A6 (ii) melt mixing the concentrate with a melt-processible matrix polyamide to form a polymer-clay nanocomposite.
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- A7 24. (Once Amended) The process of claim 22, wherein the oligomeric resin and the melt-processible matrix polyamide have the same monomer unit.
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30. (Once Amended) A process for reducing haze in an article having a nanocomposite material comprising:

- A8 (i) preparing a polymer-clay nanocomposite material comprising the step of mixing a melt-processible matrix polyamide and a layered clay material having less than about 2.0 % by weight of quartz, based on the weight of the clay material, to form a polymer-clay nanocomposite material; and
- (ii) molding an article from the nanocomposite material, wherein the article has a haze which is at least about 4 percent lower than that of an article formed from a nanocomposite having unpurified clay therein.
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Support for new claim 31 may be found, *inter alia*, in original claim 22, and in the specification at page 18, line 28; page 33, lines 19-24; page 34, lines 9-19; and in Example 1.

Support for the amendments to claims 1, 3, 4, 22, 24, and 30 relating to polyamides may be found, *inter alia*, in original claim 1, 3, 4, 22, 24, and 30, and in the specification at page 13, lines 16-18; and in the specification at page 15, line 2 through page 18, line 8.

Support for the amendments to claims 8 and 13 relating to the treatment of the clays with organic cations may be found, *inter alia*, in original claims 8 and 13, and in the specification at page 20, lines 24-33; page 22, lines 16-23; page 28, lines 4-11; and Examples 1-3.